

# **Psychology Internship Program**

**2016 – 2017  
Internship Training Year**



**Syracuse Veterans Affairs Medical Center,  
Syracuse, NY**

Accredited by the American Psychological Association

**MATCH Number: 149611  
Applications Due: November 7, 2015**

Behavioral Health Outpatient Center (BHOC)  
620 Erie Boulevard West  
Syracuse, NY 13204

## Introduction

The Psychology Internship Program at Syracuse VA prepares interns for professional practice in a medical center or health services setting that serves primarily adults. Many alumni secure employment or post-doctoral fellowships within Veterans Affairs, other medical centers, or the military; others have gone into academic positions or independent practice. VA training staff are guided by the words of Abraham Lincoln who charged the nation "to care for him who shall have borne the battle," a mission and value that interns increasingly grow to appreciate throughout their internship training.



## Accreditation

Our most recent site visit and re-accreditation from APA occurred in 2014. We received the full seven-year accreditation and anticipate the next site visit in 2021. Questions related to the program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation  
American Psychological Association  
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 336-5979 / E-mail: [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)  
Web: [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

## Comments of Internship Alumni

“The combination of a high quality clinical training environment coupled with significant support around professional development provides interns with a program that truly helps them to succeed professionally.”

“This internship prepared me very well for post-doc. I received a great breadth of experience and was also given the freedom to gain greater depth of experience in PTSD, which is a main area of clinical interest for me.”

“The time and effort put in by staff and supervisors to make this a valuable learning experience is very clear...I have grown immensely both personally and professionally this year.”

“I have been very fortunate for this internship experience. I have grown so much as a clinician in the past year as a result of the amazing supervision, great seminars/training opportunities and exposure to such a diverse population!”

“This internship and the psychology staff as a whole has helped me develop professionally and gain confidence in my abilities more during the past year than all my other years of graduate training.”

“This was an outstanding training experience that was ideal for preparing me for a career as a well-rounded psychologist.”





## Philosophy of Training

The Syracuse VA Psychology Internship follows a practitioner-scholar model of training. We view psychological practice and scholarly inquiry as mutually informing. Interns are encouraged to develop their reflective skills and to generate and test hypotheses in their clinical work. Our practice is informed by the scientific literature and there is opportunity to receive training in evidenced-based treatments which are

increasingly influential throughout Veterans Affairs. As practitioner-scholars, interns deliver at least three formal presentations to staff and colleagues throughout the year.

We emphasize a firm foundation in generalist skills, reflected in two "rotations" that continue throughout the year. All Interns participate in the Outpatient Mental Health clinic, gaining experience in both short-term and longer-term psychotherapy as well as comprehensive intake assessment with a diverse patient population. Interns also participate in Assessment throughout the year, supervised in the use of integrated test batteries and more specialized assessments (e.g., pre-surgical evaluations). In addition, Interns receive in-depth training in Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD and gain experience in a number of specialty clinics (e.g., PTSD, Health Psychology, Substance Use, Home-Based Primary Care, Neuropsychology) and. This complements our generalist training and prepares interns for entry-level positions in these areas.

A shared humanistic sensibility among staff complements our appreciation for technical knowledge and skills. We strive to recognize our biases, the conditional nature of our worldviews, their social/political contexts, and their impact on relations among us all, whether faculty, Intern, or Veteran client. The Multicultural and Diversity Committee works to increase awareness and knowledge of, as well as competency in, diversity-related issues. Through seminars, journal club, and invited speakers, we address such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, military culture, age, SES, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression, and religious/spiritual diversity.

Our approach to training values mentorship and intensive supervision. We provide ample opportunity for formal supervision and encourage ad-hoc meetings or "curb-side consultations," as supervisors are widely available. We follow a developmental model of transferring knowledge and skills; interns often begin a rotation observing supervisors' clinical work, receive in-vivo-supervision, followed by increasingly independent practice. Interns will find training sequential and characterized by increasing complexity, based on developing knowledge and skills.

## Training Settings

Syracuse VA provides primary and behavioral health care throughout a 13-county area of Central New York. This allows for a wide diversity in the patient population with regard to culture and geography (rural/urban/suburban). Patients are served at eight community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in addition to the Syracuse VA Medical Center and the Behavioral Health Outpatient Center (BHOC). Internship training takes place at BHOC, with optional rotations at the Medical Center, and a CBOC.

In 2009, the Behavioral Health Outpatient Center was established to house a number of services, including Outpatient Mental Health, PTSD Clinical Team, Substance Treatment Service, Home-Based Primary Care, and the Center for Integrated Healthcare. Staff enjoy offices and conference rooms specifically designed for these services. Interns have appreciated each having their own comfortable office with dedicated computer and phone.

Interns have been fortunate to secure parking passes for the Medical Center (about two miles from BHOC), making it convenient when a day is split between training rotations at BHOC and those at the Medical Center (e.g., Primary Care Mental Health Integration, Long-term Care). The VAMC has been expanding in recent years, including a \$90 million six-floor addition that houses a 30-bed Spinal Cord Injury/Disease Center. It is a vibrant “Deans Committee” hospital that accommodates hundreds of residents, students, and trainees each year and has a \$2.5 million research and development program with over a hundred studies in various topics.



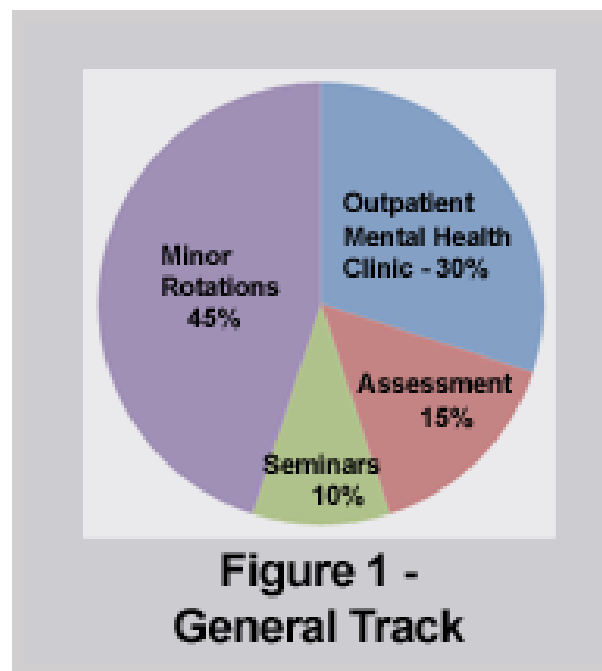


## Goals and Objectives

Our over-arching goal is to prepare students to function as competent entry-level psychologists, particularly as clinicians serving adult clients. Training objectives include development of knowledge and skills in the following areas: Foundational Personal and Professional Skills, Ethics, Diversity, Scholarly Inquiry, Consultation, Assessment, Intervention, Supervision and Teaching.

## Program Description

For the 2016-17 training year, the Syracuse VA Psychology Internship will offer four positions, each in what has been described as a “general track.” The approximate distribution of training activities is presented in Figure 1. The Outpatient Mental Health Clinic, Assessment, and Seminars represent year-long experiences. Minor rotations (about 18 hours/week) change on a trimester basis and generally consist of two or more specialty training experiences.



**Outpatient Mental Health Clinic (OMH: 12 to 16 hours/week):** A major focus of the training program is extensive experience in the practice of psychotherapy. Diagnostic interviewing is also integral to this rotation. OMH is a relatively large clinic where interns gain experience consulting with staff and trainees from a variety of disciplines, as well as other clinics. Interns learn the role of "treatment coordinator," managing cases, and handling crises. Interns treat a range of patients in both short and longer-term psychotherapy. Although most are individual cases, couples cases are available and family consultations are sometimes indicated. Theoretical orientations include

cognitive-behavioral, psychodynamic, and integrative approaches. Close supervision is provided, including a minimum of one hour per week of formal supervision as well as less formal supervisory contact for individual cases as needed. Interns typically schedule one intake and five hours of individual outpatient contacts a week. Supervisors and interns meet weekly for Disposition Case Conference, where intakes are presented and discussed in depth, treatment disposition is determined, and relevant readings are discussed. Interns who opt for a more intensive 16 hour/week rotation may also participate in a weekly interdisciplinary teamlet meeting.

**Psychological Assessment (6 hours):** Interns conduct psychological testing/ assessment on an outpatient basis throughout the year. The goal is an average of one assessment weekly, though the number varies in any given week, based on demand. Evaluations emphasize objective measures of personality, assessment of intellectual functioning, and diagnostic interviewing. Typical referral questions include differential diagnosis, clarification of underlying defenses and coping mechanisms, ruling out psychosis or a personality disorder, assessment of a possible learning disability, organ transplant evaluations, or mood evaluations of patients undergoing treatment for Hepatitis C. An extensive library of objective psychological measures is available for computerized administration and scoring. The goal of this training is to promote the development of entry-level competence in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of standard psychological measures. Interns participate in weekly supervision, Assessment Seminar, and Assessment Case Conference throughout the year.

**Seminars (4 hours):** Instruction in a wide range of clinical and professional issues takes place in the Assessment Seminar and the Special Topics Seminar, each of which meets weekly. Topics typically covered in the latter seminar include psychopathology, treatment-specific interventions, and areas of professional development. Recently, we have offered in-depth training in Cognitive Processing Therapy and in Prolonged Exposure Therapy. A Diversity Seminar series meets monthly, on average. The Multicultural and Diversity Committee also organizes quarterly topical discussions for the facility, generally inviting outside speakers. Interns may attend professional colloquia provided by the VA Center for Integrated Healthcare and the Psychiatry Department at SUNY Upstate Medical University. Finally, interns may be given authorized time to attend regional and national professional conferences and continuing education workshops.

### **Minor Rotations:**

Interns choose among various minor rotations for each of the three trimesters. These combined experiences account for approximately 18 hours/week. Some larger rotations (e.g., STS, PCT) are available for one trimester only, with a "rotation extension" allowing interns to continue beyond one trimester, at a lower level of involvement.

**Integrated Primary Care (8-12 hours):** Primary Care Mental Health Integration uses a Behavioral Medicine perspective to address the interface between medical conditions and psychosocial problems. Functioning as a Behavioral Health Consultant, the intern will be involved in assessment, triage and brief treatment for psychiatric/psychological disorders. Patients are seen as scheduled appointments and on a walk-in basis as "warm handoffs" from PCPs.

The intern will interact with all interdisciplinary Primary Care teams (including Women's Health) that use a managed care model for all Veterans. Each team consists of health care professionals including: Physicians and other Primary Care Providers (PCP), Nurse Case Managers, and other Nursing staff. Psychologists function as Extended Team members along with Social Workers, and Pharmacists. Teams are responsible for all health care needs including Patient Education, Prevention and Maintenance and referrals for Specialty Care/Treatment. There is also the opportunity to help create and run educational seminars for patients and a variety of hospital staff. Interns may also choose to provide these services in the Oswego and Auburn Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs).

**Substance Treatment Service (12 hrs.):** During a rotation in the Substance Treatment Service (STS), interns will learn about various forms of treatment available to those with substance use/related disorders. Interns will have the opportunity to function as a member of an interdisciplinary team, including social workers, addiction therapists, psychiatrists and nurses. As STS is an outpatient program based upon the transtheoretical model of change, the assessment of readiness for change is viewed as central to the case conceptualization and treatment planning process. Through participation in interdisciplinary team meetings and experience conducting intake assessments, interns will learn to evaluate the presence and severity of substance use disorders, evaluate readiness for change, and make appropriate treatment recommendations or referrals. Interns will also carry a small caseload of clients who are in need of short-term individual psychotherapy, in addition to substance treatment. This will allow interns to gain experience in the provision of psychotherapy to those with co-occurring diagnoses. In addition, interns will participate in at least two groups. Groups which interns have co-facilitated in the past include Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Education, IOP Therapy support, Relapse Prevention, and Seeking Safety. There are also opportunities to become involved in program development.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (12 hrs.):** This rotation with the specialized Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team (PCT) provides interns with an opportunity to work more intensely in the specific treatment of trauma, including combat trauma, military trauma, sexually-based and abuse-related trauma. Interns will become familiar with the basics of taking a trauma history, assessing PTSD symptoms, and learning how to utilize evidence based treatments for trauma. Interns will also have the opportunity to work collaboratively with other members of the PCT team. Interns will be assigned intake assessments, which include the use of a structured



assessment for PTSD, and will be expected to attend the weekly PCT Team Meeting, where intakes are presented and treatment disposition is determined. A full caseload will generally consist of 4 individual cases and co-facilitation of a therapy group. Close supervision is provided including a minimum of one hour per week of formal supervision, as well as less formal supervisory contact as needed. There are also opportunities to become involved in program development. Interns will have the opportunity to participate in a VA-certified training on Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD followed by at least 6 months of weekly case consultation.

**Neuropsychology (12 hrs.):** This rotation familiarizes the intern with basic brain-behavior relationships and principles of neuropsychological testing using a hypothesis-testing, process-oriented approach. The rotation provides individual didactic training along with assigned reading to strengthen the intern's understanding and knowledge of neuropsychological principles. In addition to learning basic brain-behavior relationships, the intern will become familiar with neuropsychological profiles of common presenting etiologies and will develop diagnostic skills to assess cognitive functioning, to differentiate between a variety of etiologies, and to provide appropriate treatment recommendations to the patient and to the referring professional. The intern will learn test administration methods beginning with observation of the supervisor, followed by close supervision and then independent test administration. Test interpretation and test report writing will be closely supervised.

**Home Based Primary Care (HBPC; 8 to 12 hrs.):** This minor rotation provides interns an opportunity to be a member of a primary care team with delivery of service in the patient's home. The intern will be a member of an interdisciplinary team which also includes a physician, a social worker, and several nurses. This rotation provides opportunities for individual, family, and couples psychotherapy as well as psychological assessment for patients who are often coping with significant medical illness. HBPC patients are often, though not exclusively, among the geriatric population. Supported psychotherapy orientations include, but are not limited to, cognitive-behavioral, humanistic and existential approaches with emphasis on maximizing quality of life within the patient's functional limitations. Helping patients gain better acceptance of inevitable changes in functional status is also a common psychotherapy focus with our patients. In addition, interns may be involved in conducting assessments with emphasis on psychodiagnostics as well as screening for cognitive status and assessing patients' decision making capacity when appropriate. Given the nature of the home-based delivery of services, interns may work conjointly with the supervising psychologist. Interns will work with at least two longer-term psychotherapy cases over the full course of the four month rotation in addition to other shorter-term psychotherapy cases. Close supervision is provided, including a minimum of one hour per week of formal supervision as well as less formal supervisory contact as needed.

**Research Rotation (4 to 8 hours):** This rotation provides training and practical experiences in the area of clinical or applied mental health research. The Center for Integrated Healthcare

conducts research that supports the integration and delivery of mental health services into the primary care setting. Much of the research in Syracuse is focused on the assessment and treatment of PTSD and substance use. Specific research experiences would vary depending on the research studies that are currently running. However experiences that would likely be available on a routine basis include: a) conducting clinical interviews with measures such as the Clinician Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS) and the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (SCID), b) data analysis and research manuscript writing, and c) providing manualized psychotherapy or brief interventions. Interns will be selected based on their interests and previous research experience. This rotation requires a 9-12 month commitment. Hours per week can vary depending on the specific experiences the intern is interested in. Interns conducting clinical interviews and interventions need to commit at least 8 hours per week; those interested in data analysis and manuscript preparation may do rotations as short as 4 hours a week.

**Community Living Center (4 hrs.):** The CLC provides long-term care, respite care, sub-acute rehabilitation, and hospice care to veterans. Interns that participate in this rotation will have an opportunity to work within an interdisciplinary team that delivers services to Veterans and their family members. This is a great opportunity to serve an older population and treat traditional mental health issues such as depression, adjustment issues, and anxiety. In addition, many residents face issues of aging and failing health. Thus, many residents need help with resolving issues of chronic illness while living in a residential setting. In particular, interns will be called upon to assist with challenging behaviors that often result from individuals who have moderate and severe levels of dementia/cognitive impairments. The hospice wing also creates a unique experience for interns to provide counseling regarding end of the life of issues and/or to offer supportive services to family members.

**Outpatient Group Psychotherapy (2-4 hours):** During the training year, each intern co-facilitates at least one psychotherapy or psychoeducational group (typically several). These experiences are often embedded in a larger rotation (e.g., PCT, STS), though several are available independent of a clinic rotation. Examples of recent groups are: Anxiety and Stress Management, Coping With Anger, Seeking Safety, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, and Change-Readiness Group. An Amputee Support group and a Cognitive Skills group may be available.

**Minor Rotation Extensions (4 hours):** In the second and third trimesters, interns may have the option of continuing some involvement with a preceding minor rotation. This enables interns to further develop their skills in a specialty area by continuing involvement with group therapy, individual cases, program development, or other aspects of the particular clinic.

**Special Projects (4 hours):** Interns may have the option of completing a special project during their internship year. In recent years, interns have been involved in program development as well as creating and conducting new group therapies. Others have gained administrative experience,

as in assisting with internship program evaluation for APA review, or arranging a special rotation in Administration with the Behavioral Health Care Line Manager. Time for the special project generally does not exceed 4 hours a week and is negotiated to have as little impact on other training activities as possible.

## **Competency-based Training**

Specific competencies, within each objective area, are listed below. Policies pertaining to evaluation, due process, and other topics are described in the Intern Handbook and Policy Manual. Copies are available by contacting the Training Director ([Daniel.purnine@va.gov](mailto:Daniel.purnine@va.gov)).

### Foundational Personal and Professional Skills

Personal Self-awareness  
Personal Self-regulation  
Professional Self-awareness/regulation  
Manages Responsibilities  
Professional Development  
Professional Relationships  
Responsiveness to Supervision  
Written and Verbal Expression

### Ethics

Ethical Knowledge  
Ethical Practice  
Policy/Practice  
Risk Management

### Diversity

Awareness/Knowledge  
Applied Knowledge

### Scholarly Inquiry

Knowledge/Attitude

### Application

Program Evaluation

### Consultation

Addressing Referral  
Role Effectiveness  
Communication of Results

### Assessment

Diagnosis  
Testing Knowledge  
Application and Interpretation  
Communication of Findings

### Intervention

Treatment Planning  
Relationship/Process  
Therapeutic Skills  
Empirically Supported Treatment  
Evaluating Progress  
Supervision and Teaching  
Knowledge of Supervision  
Practice

## Psychology Faculty

Psychology functions as part of the Behavioral Health Care Line within the Medical Center. This care line encompasses all behavioral health services at the main hospital, at two local off-site locations (Behavioral Health Outpatient Center & Veterans Wellness and Recovery Center), and at remote Community Based Outpatient Clinics.



**Dr. Robert Barash** is a Clinical Psychologist whose clinical orientation includes Psychodynamic, Cognitive Behavioral, and Humanistic models. He provides instruction to interns and is based in Outpatient Mental Health where he sees individuals and runs groups. Dr. Barash's work history includes experience in general counseling, geropsychology, college lecturing, and organizational development. He is a graduate of Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale Florida. He completed an internship at the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center's inpatient and outpatient sites in Wingdale and White Plains, New York.

**Dr. Tanya S. Bowen** is a supervisor on Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) rotation and she delivers a variety of seminars for the internship training program. Dr. Bowen works as the Behavioral Health Consultant for Team Red and the Women's Health Clinic. In this

capacity, she provides brief counseling using a behavioral health perspective, to Veterans presenting with a wide array of concerns. Dr. Bowen received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from SUNY Buffalo in 1995 and completed her internship at the Buffalo VA Medical Center. Her interests include complex and simple Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anxiety, diversity issues, and relationship concerns. Before joining the VA, Dr. Bowen spent the first 15 years of her career in college mental health. Prior to joining the VA in 2009, she spent over a decade working at Syracuse University where she was the Associate Director of the Counseling Center and the Director of the Clinical Services. Dr. Bowen maintains a small private practice in the Syracuse Community.

**Dr. Charles Bradshaw** is a neuropsychologist who coordinates the Assessment rotation and also supervises Interns in the Neuropsychological Assessment rotation. He evaluates the cognitive capacities of Veterans with suspected brain damage or other neurologically-based conditions and provides treatment recommendations. He is a co-investigator in a multi-center research study examining the effects of traumatic brain injury in returning Veterans. Before coming to the Syracuse VA, Dr. Bradshaw was Director of Neuropsychological Services in the Department of Neurology at the SUNY Upstate Medical University, where he continues to hold appointments as an Associate Professor in the Departments of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry. He remains clinically active in the University Hospital's Comprehensive Epilepsy Program and he continues to participate in a number of research projects at Upstate. He received his PhD at SUNY Albany and holds a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. He completed pre-doctoral and post-doctoral internships in neuropsychology at the Boston University School of Medicine/Boston VA consortium. His research interests include the neuropsychology of memory, language, epilepsy, dementia, and traumatic brain injury, with publications appearing in *Nature*, the *Lancet*, the *Archives of Neurology*, and the *Journal of the International Neuropsychology Society*, among others.

**Dr. Jill DelTosta** is a supervisor for the OMH Clinic rotation since joining the Syracuse VA in 2015. After completing her internship at the Orlando VA, she conducted her post-doctoral work in the PTSD Clinic at the Albany VA. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University at Albany in 2014. Dr. DelTosta is a trained generalist psychologist who specializes in the treatment of diverse reactions to trauma. In addition to training, supervision, and mentorship, her professional and clinical interests include holistic wellness and prevention, healthcare provider self-care, and assessment. She employs cognitive and experiential interventions within the context of humanistic principles of therapy, after having been trained largely from dynamic and interpersonal perspectives.

**Dr. Laura Hayward** is a supervisor in the Outpatient Mental Health rotation and delivers a variety of seminars for the internship training program, including those related to evidence-based practice, professional development, and anger management. Dr. Hayward received her Ph.D. in

Clinical Psychology from Binghamton University in 2011, completed internship at the Durham VA Medical Center in North Carolina, and served as a postdoctoral fellow in the PTSD and OEF/OIF/OND Clinics at the Durham VA, where she received specialized training in the use of evidence-based practices for PTSD (PE; CPT) before joining the training staff in Syracuse in 2012. She is the Local Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Coordinator in Syracuse and serves on the training program's Multicultural and Diversity Committee. Dr. Hayward's research interests include factors impacting the development of psychopathology and the therapeutic process, including resilience and cognitive capacity, OC spectrum disorders, and anxiety. Her research is published in the Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment, Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, and Behaviour Research and Therapy, among others. Current professional interests include anger, anxiety, PTSD, and depression.

**Dr. Jane Higham** is a supervisor on the PTSD and Substance Use Disorders rotations, and delivers seminars for the internship training program on topics such as Avoiding Burnout, DBT, and Readiness for Change. She received her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University at Albany and completed internship at the Syracuse VAMC. Dr. Higham was hired at the Syracuse VAMC following her internship in 2009, and is currently the PTSD/SUD Psychologist. She is the VISN 2 CPT Regional Trainer, and VA Certified in both CPT and PE treatments for PTSD. Dr. Higham published in the Journal of Family Therapy. Current professional interests areas include PTSD and trauma-recovery, PTSD/SUD dual diagnosis, and family therapeutic alliance development.

**Dr. Laura Hruska** is a supervisor on the Assessment rotation and delivers seminars for the internship training program. She received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Kent State University in 2015 after completing an internship at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System. She joined the Syracuse VAMC staff in 2015 as an Outpatient Mental Health Clinic psychologist. Dr. Hruska's clinical interests include psychological assessment, cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, mindfulness-based interventions, and cognitive-behavioral therapy for insomnia. Her research interests include risk for depression among adults and adolescents, and the development and maintenance of affective symptoms related to cognitive vulnerabilities and maladaptive coping strategies. Dr. Hruska's published work has appeared in Cognition & Emotion, Behavior Therapy, The International Journal of Psychology, and The Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology.

**Dr. Carolyn T. Jackson** is the Home-Based Primary Care Psychologist at the Rome CBOC and delivers seminars for the internship training program. Dr. Jackson received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Texas Tech University. She completed her predoctoral internship at the Cleveland VAMC and joined the staff at the Syracuse VAMC in 2010. Her clinical interests include the relationship between military cultural experience and clinical issues among military Veterans, as well as the delivery of empirically-supported clinical interventions to those who



reside in rural and/or socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. Her research interests include the conceptualization and measurement of cultural sensitivity. Her co-authored chapter on Cultural Considerations and Treatment Complications appears in the clinical textbook entitled *Avoiding Treatment Failures in the Anxiety Disorders*. Dr. Jackson's current teaching interests include in-service trainings which make theoretical and applied understanding of the military culture more accessible to both behavioral and non-behavioral providers. Dr. Jackson is a military Veteran who completed eight years active-duty service in the United States Air Force.

**Dr. Robert H. Kuehnel, ABPP (Clinical)**, is Home-Based Primary Care Psychologist at the Syracuse VAMC, and he supervises the HBPC minor rotation. He previously served as Lead Psychologist. Prior to coming to the Syracuse VAMC, Dr. Kuehnel was an Instructor with the Weight and Eating Disorders Program at the University of Pennsylvania. He also conducted a private practice of Psychology on Philadelphia's Main Line. Prior to that, Dr. Kuehnel was Director of the Psychological Services Center, the in-house training clinic of the Department of Psychology of Syracuse University. He earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Maine in 1988, and completed his internship at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX. Dr. Kuehnel also completed a one-year postdoctoral fellowship in Cognitive Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania in 1991. His past research interests are in psychological factors that affect the outcomes of bariatric surgery, lifestyle factors in the management of type 2 diabetes, and the nature and treatment of Binge Eating Disorder. Dr. Kuehnel has published in *The International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *The Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, and *Obesity*.

**Dr. Allan Landes** is a clinical psychologist in the SCI-D Program at the SVAMC. He provides consultation to the SCI/D and Rehab center, and the Polytrauma service. He mainly works with an inpatient rehab population (SCI, amputation, brain injury/stroke, post-surgery). He is an active member of the Ethics Consult Service, and a voting member of the IRB. Dr. Landes received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Kent State University, with additional education from Antioch College, Cleveland State University, and the Menninger Foundation; internship was at Louis Stokes Cleveland VAMC, and postdoctoral fellowship was at the Minneapolis VAMC. Clinical interests include rehabilitation and health psychology, neurobehavioral aspects of acquired brain injuries, health-related behavior changes, and acceptance-based therapies. Published research interests are behavioral symptoms in neurological disorders, and applying acceptance-based therapies to medical disorders. Dr. Landes has presented at the Gerontological Society of America and the International Neuropsychological Society, and has published in *Behavior Therapy*, *The Gerontologist*, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, and the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*.

**Dr. Rebecca Moe** is a supervisor on the PTSD rotation and delivers seminars for the internship training program. She received her Psy.D. in clinical psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology in 2009 after completing an internship at Hudson Valley VA Health Care System. Her postdoctoral training was completed as a graduate psychologist at the Bath VA Medical Center, where her focus was on developing a PTSD treatment program in a rural healthcare setting. Dr. Moe joined the medical staff at the Syracuse VA Medical Center in 2014. She serves as a VISN 2 PTSD Mentor. Dr. Moe applies an integrative theoretical framework in the treatment of PTSD and complex PTSD. She is trained in and utilizes multiple evidence-based psychotherapies for the treatment of PTSD, including Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia, Conjoint Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, and Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation.

**Dr. Courtney R. Morris** teaches seminars on Motivational Interviewing, Behavioral Pain Management, Assessment of Chronic Pain, EPPP and Information for Early Psychologists. In addition, Dr. Morris is a clinical supervisor for the Assessment rotation and is involved with the diversity training committee. She received her PhD in counseling psychology from the University of Denver, completed her internship at the VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, and engaged in a partial fellowship at the Louis Stokes Cleveland VAMC in Primary Care. Dr. Morris joined the training staff in 2015. She is a co-SEPM for the LGBT diversity committee and a member of APA. She has published works in the journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Practice and the Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology journal. Her clinical interests include: CBT for Chronic Pain, Trauma-Focused Treatment, Dual Diagnosis, Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy, Familial/Caregiver support, Tobacco Cessation, Motivational Interviewing, Primary Care, Diversity Sensitivity & Training, and LGBT diversity issues.

**Dr. Kyle Possemato** is a research investigator with the Center for Integrated Healthcare at the Syracuse VAMC and supervises a research rotation. Dr. Possemato's research focuses on developing, testing and implementing interventions for trauma, PTSD and substance use disorders with an emphasis on interventions that can be delivered in non-traditional ways in order to increase patient engagement. Examples include brief interventions delivered in the primary care setting and technology-based (e.g., web and smart phone) interventions. Her research is currently supported by VA, NIH and DoD research grants and she has published in various journals including the Journal of General Internal Medicine, Implementation Science, and Psychiatric Services. Dr. Possemato earned her PhD in Clinical Health Psychology from Drexel University and completed her pre-doctoral psychology internship in the Department of Psychiatry at the State University of New York, Upstate Medical University and a two-year post-doctoral fellowship at the CIH. Dr. Possemato also holds faculty appointments in the Department of Psychology at Syracuse University and the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

at the State University of New York, Upstate Medical University.

**Dr. Daniel Purnine** is Director of Training for the Syracuse VA Psychology Internship Program and a supervisor in the Outpatient Mental Health rotation. He delivers seminars on a variety of topics. Dr. Purnine earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Syracuse University and completed his internship at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and Worcester State Hospital. He joined the staff at Syracuse VAMC in 2001 and holds an adjunct appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor to the Department of Psychiatry, SUNY Upstate Medical University. Dr. Purnine's published research has encompassed the areas of substance abuse, readiness for change, interpersonal communication, sexual preferences and adjustment, and affective disorders. Current clinical interests include integrative psychotherapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, integrative couples therapy, existential psychology, and the interface of psychology and religion.

**Dr. Cheryl Seifert** is a supervisor on the health psychology rotation and delivers seminars for the internship training program. She joined the Syracuse VAMC staff in 2014 and serves as a behavioral health consultant in primary care at the Oswego CBOC. Dr. Seifert received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University at Albany, SUNY in 2012. She completed her clinical internship and a post-doctoral fellowship in psychosocial rehabilitation at VA Connecticut, West Haven campus. She is a member of APA, including division 18 (Psychologists in Public Service). Her research background is primarily in the area of problem gambling, with a particular interest in motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral treatments for gambling disorders. Her current area of interest is in integrated primary care, including the application of motivational interviewing techniques in this setting.

**Dr. Shaden D. Sousou** presents seminars related to Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI). She supervises Behavioral Health Consultants in the primary care clinics at the Syracuse VA Medical Center and the CBOCs. She oversees the PCMHI Program and works closely with primary care leadership to ensure integration of behavioral health services in primary care. She also is a Behavioral Health Consultant in primary care and a staff psychologist in the Outpatient Mental Health Clinic. Dr. Sousou earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University at Albany, State University of New York in 2004. She completed her internship at the Syracuse VA Medical Center. Prior to her current position at the Syracuse VA, Dr. Sousou was a Clinic Psychologist at ARC of Onondaga where she worked with individuals with developmental disabilities. Dr. Sousou's current clinical and research interests include integrated primary care and health psychology. Dr. Sousou has published in Perceptual and Motor Skills.

**Dr. Douglas A. Thompson** delivers a number of seminars to Interns, including Positive Psychology, Assessment of Decision Making Capacity and End-of-Life Counseling. He served

as Home Based Primary Care (HBPC) psychologist prior to a recent transition to Outpatient Mental Health at the Binghamton CBOC. Dr. Thompson earned his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from The University of Memphis and completed his internship at the VA Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky. Prior to his appointment to the Syracuse VA Medical Center, Dr. Thompson worked with lower income families and clients dealing with chronic mental illness. Dr. Thompson's current clinical interests include clinical outcome measurement, process-experiential psychotherapy approaches, as well as counseling clients and families facing end-of-life and bereavement. Dr. Thompson has participated in several presentations at professional conferences including, most recently, at the 2015 American Psychological Association Convention in Toronto. This presentation addressed reducing access barriers to psychological services for rural and lower SES veterans. Dr. Thompson approaches psychotherapy from an integration perspective with particular emphasis on humanistic/constructivist approaches.

**Dr. Tanya Williamson** serves as the Lead Psychologist, supervises a rotation with the Community Living Center, and provides direct clinical care and consultation to the Geriatric Care Line. She teaches seminars on Race/Ethnicity, Private Practice, Transgender issues, Long-Term Care, and Geriatric topics. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Binghamton University and completed her internship at Upstate Medical University. She joined the staff in 2009 and has delivered services in the areas of Health Psychology, Patient-Centered Care courses, Chronic Pain, Insomnia, and Geriatrics. She serves on the Multicultural and Diversity Committee within the Psychology Program. In addition, she serves as Adjunct Faculty to the Upstate Medical University, Psychology Department. Her current clinical interests include Insomnia, Chronic Pain, Transgender issues, and challenging behaviors associated with cognitive impairments.

## **Applying to the Program**

The Syracuse VA Medical Center accepts interns through the auspices of the Department of Veterans Affairs Psychology Training Program. Applicants must be citizens of the United States and doctoral candidates in Clinical or Counseling Psychology from programs accredited by the American Psychological Association. As an equal opportunity training program, we encourage applications from all qualified candidates, regardless of ethnic, racial, or gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or other minority status.

A minimum of 600 practicum hours of intervention and assessment is required; we prefer at least 800 hours. We also prefer that applicants defend their dissertation proposal prior to beginning their internship. The internship year begins on a Monday, generally in late August. Please consult the APPIC Directory On Line for information on next year's start date. Also included there are specifics regarding the stipend amount and other benefits.

Students who wish to apply should do the following:

Register for the APPIC Match through National Matching Services (NMS).

Complete the online APPIC Application for Psychology Internship (AAPI), including three letters of recommendation.

Your cover letter should include any particular career objectives or internship goals you may have.

Application materials must be submitted by November 7. Interviews will be offered to those applicants whose interests and training best fit the goals of the program. We offer two interview days in December and two days in early January. Each includes a program overview, two interviews, lunch with current Interns, and options to meet additional staff. We take a group photo to help staff remember each applicant. For those who are unable to schedule a personal interview, a telephone interview may be arranged. Intern selection is based on a number of factors including demonstration of a strong academic background, scholarly productivity, and clinical practicum experience. Also important is the fit between the intern's professional interests/plans and the mission of the VA, as well as the goals and philosophy of our training program.

Requests for further information should be directed to:

**Daniel Purnine, Ph.D**  
**Director, Psychology Training Program (116)**  
**VA Medical Center**  
**800 Irving Avenue**  
**Syracuse, New York 13210**

**Phone: (315) 425-3488**

**Email: [Daniel.purnine@va.gov](mailto:Daniel.purnine@va.gov)**

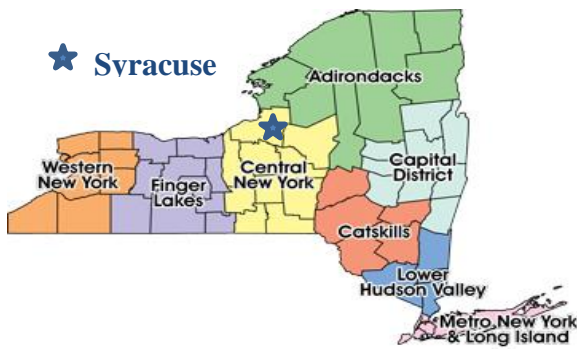
The Syracuse VA Medical Center abides by the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (AAPIC) policy that no person at this training facility will solicit, accept or use any ranking-related information from any intern applicant. Additional information regarding this internship is available through the APPIC Directory, online. Please refer to the APPIC website at [www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org) for current dates, policies, and information. Please refer also to the National Matching Services, Inc. website at [www.natmatch.com](http://www.natmatch.com) and register for the matching program in order to be eligible to match to the Syracuse VA. Matching results and applicant notification of placement will occur on the date agreed upon by AAPIC.

Please be aware of the following requirements for all internships with Veterans Affairs:

1. United States Citizenship. Veterans Affairs accepts only current U.S. citizens as psychology interns. Prior to internship, matched applicants would be required to sign a Certification of U.S. Citizenship.
2. Drug Screening. The VA conducts drug screening exams on randomly selected personnel. Interns are subject to these random screens as are all other staff.
3. Selective Service Registration. The federal government requires that male applicants to VA positions who were born after 12/31/59 must sign a Pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they are employed.
4. Background Checks. All new employees, including psychology interns, are also subject to fingerprinting and background checks as a condition of their appointment.



## Syracuse and the Central New York Region



The Syracuse VA is located in the city of Syracuse in the heart of Central New York (CNY). With a greater metropolitan population of over 730,000, Syracuse offers big-city amenities and countless recreational /cultural opportunities while still maintaining a favorable cost-of-living and small-city feel. Syracuse boasts a thriving downtown district with excellent food (home of the original Dinosaur BBQ), nightlife, and entertainment opportunities, including the Museum of Science and Technology, Everson Museum of Art, and the Syracuse Stage for creative theatre and performing arts. Syracuse is also home to a thriving intellectual community, including, most notably, Syracuse University. Sports fans can delight in attending an athletic event at the nationally-recognized SU “Dome.” Destiny USA was also recently expanded, providing the region with a six-story shopping and entertainment complex. Finally, given its central location in the heart of New York, Syracuse is within a day’s drive of several major metropolitan areas, including New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Montreal, Toronto, and Washington D.C.



*Syracuse Skyline*

Syracuse is not just for city-living. Locals cherish the area as the nation’s “best kept secret” for the breath-taking beauty of the CNY landscape, which features rolling hills, countless streams and lakes, vivid fall foliage, and clean air and water. The Finger Lakes region is within an hour’s drive of Syracuse, and offers picturesque views of glacially-formed lakes and the nationally-recognized Finger Lakes Wine Trails. The greater CNY region is an outdoor enthusiast’s dream. Lake Ontario, the Finger Lakes, and the Adirondack Mountain Region are all in Syracuse’s backyard, and there are endless hiking, skiing, swimming, running, fishing, boating, and other outdoor recreational opportunities. Further, Syracuse enjoys four distinct seasons, allowing for a new sport or hobby to be enjoyed every few months.

## Syracuse and the Central New York Region



***Finger Lakes Region***

We would be remiss if we did not mention that Syracuse is among one of the nation's snowiest cities. But fear not – the area is proficient in dealing with snow, making your daily winter experience more than manageable. Residents can count on several great weeks of cross country and downhill skiing, outdoor ice skating, and unparalleled snowman building.

Below is more information about daily living in Syracuse, as well as links to the area's most popular cultural and recreational opportunities.

Overall, Syracuse is an easily accessible, affordable city with opportunities for everyone. We think you'll love it here, but come see for yourself.

### **Cost of Living/Quality of Life:**

- The cost of living in Syracuse is 8.6% below the national average.
- Housing
  - Average rent for a one bedroom is \$655 (range \$550-\$850 depending on proximity to downtown). Average rent for a 2 bedroom is \$806.
  - The average home cost is \$137,621. Costs varies with location and city vs. suburbs.
- Commute
  - Most people drive to and from all their destinations. There is a bus system (Centro), but no subway or commuter train system.
  - The commute from downtown to the BHOC is minimal (5 – 15 minutes). There are also a variety of suburban areas that offer reasonable commutes. Baldwinsville, Liverpool, Camillus, East Syracuse, Jamesville, Dewitt, Fayetteville, and Manlius are all within a 15 – 45 minute drive (depending on traffic).
- Access
  - Hancock International Airport
  - Amtrak (train) & Greyhound, Trailways, Megabus, and Neon (bus) stations
- Regarding family relocation potential, the top area employers are in the manufacturing, healthcare, education, food and service, finance, and retail industries.

### **Climate:**

- Four distinct seasons. Average seasonal temperatures:
  - January: 24°F      April: 46°F      July: 71°F      September: 62°F
- Annual average snowfall: 114 inches

## Syracuse and the Central New York Region

### Distance From Other Major Cities [miles/time (by car)]:

- Niagara Falls, NY: 163 miles/2.5 hours
- Toronto, ON: 248 miles/4 hours
- Montreal, QU: 248 miles/4 hours
- New York City, NY: 253 miles/4 hours
- Philadelphia, PA: 255 miles/4 hours
- Boston, MA: 299 miles/4.5 hours

### Recreational and Cultural Highlights:

[Museum of Science and Technology](#)

[Everson Museum of Art](#)

[Syracuse Stage](#)

[CNY Regional Farmer's Market](#)

[Onondaga Lake Park](#)

[Destiny USA](#)

[Waterloo Premium Outlets](#)

[Syracuse University Division 1 Athletics](#)

[Finger Lakes Wine Country](#)

[Adirondack Mountain Region](#)

[Watkins Glen State Park](#)

[Ithaca Gorges](#)

[The New York State Fair](#)

## Doctoral Programs of Recent Interns

2015-2016	Pepperdine Univ.	Clinical Psy.D.
	Binghamton Univ.	Clinical Ph.D.
	Alliant Int'l U., Sacramento	Clinical Psy.D.
	Eastern Michigan Univ.	Clinical Ph.D.
2014-2015	Clark University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Bowling Green University	Clinical Ph.D.
	LaSalle University	Clinical Psy.D.
	Drexel University	Clinical Ph.D.
2013-2014	Pacific Grad Schl Psych	Clinical Ph.D.
	Syracuse University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Univ of North Dakota	Clinical Ph.D.
2012-2013	Washington State Univ	Clinical Ph.D.
	Kent State Univ	Clinical Ph.D.
	Argosy Univ –Wash DC	Clinical Psy.D.
	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
2011-2012	Syracuse University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Argosy Univ- Atlanta	Clinical Psy.D.
	Drexel University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Purdue Univ	Counseling Ph.D.
2010-2011	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
	SUNY at Albany	Counseling Ph.D.
	SUNY at Albany	Counseling Ph.D.
	Nova Southeastern	Clinical Psy.D.
2009-2010	Kent State University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Bowling Green Univ.	Clinical Ph.D.
	La Salle University	Clinical Psy.D.
	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
2008-2009	SUNY at Albany	Counseling Ph.D.
	University of Maryland	Clinical Ph.D.
	University of Alabama	Clinical Ph.D.
2007-2008	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Loyola College	Clinical Psy.D.
	University of Maine	Clinical Ph.D.
2006-2007	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
2005-2006	Spaulding University	Clinical Psy.D.
	Binghamton University	Clinical Ph.D.
	Purdue University	Clinical Ph.D.